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SPAWN





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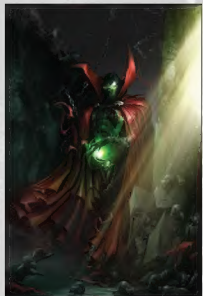
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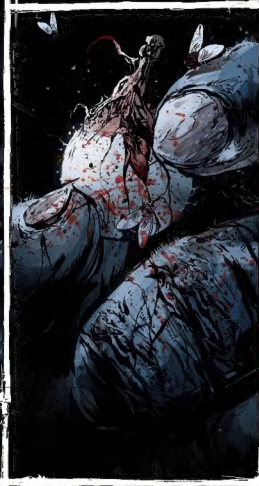
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ERIC STEPHENSON

SPAWN CREATED BY
TODD McFARLANE



PREVIOUSLY IN SPAWN

Spawn reveals the origin of the first Spawn to Marc. Heaven and Hell worked together to create two skulls and then by shattering the two skulls and forging each half together, merged the powers of the white angels and black demons, creating the very first Spawn. After Al tells Marc this story, they head to the basement where Al is keeping a demon locked away. To Marc's surprise, the demon is in the form of a small child. Spawn begins to torture the 'child' much to Marc's horror, but before his eyes, the demon sheds his human form. Spawn then awakes Cy-Gor and the giant gorilla tears apart the demon. Finally, Spawn gets to the real reason Marc has been involved in all this, he wants Marc to take him to Jim Downing.



IS HE
GOING
TO GET SICK
EATING
THAT
THING?

MAYBE.

MAYBE?
YOU DON'T
CARE?

I'M SURE
HE'LL LET ME
KNOW IF THERE'S
A PROBLEM.

BESIDES,
HE'S A GORILLA.
A DEAD GORILLA.
I'M SURE WE CAN
HANDLE IT.





I'M STILL CONFUSED ABOUT THAT, LIKE JUST A MINUTE AGO HE WAS ON THE TABLE AND THEN... BAM! HE'S EATING DEMONS.

THAT'S RIGHT.

LOOK, I'M JUST TRYING TO UNDERSTAND, THAT'S ALL.

THEN USE YOUR BRAIN. I HEARD YOU'RE A GENIUS OF SOME KIND, THAT YOU KNOW EVERYTHING. SO, STOP ACTING LIKE THIS IS ALL NEW TO YOU. YOU'VE BEEN AROUND THIS TOO LONG TO KEEP ACTING SURPRISED. USE THAT JOURNALISTIC MIND OF YOURS TO FILL IN THE GAPS.

FINE, BUT GOOD REPORTERS DON'T MAKE UP ANSWERS, THEY ASK QUESTIONS. SO, HERE'S ONE... WHERE THE HELL DID YOUR NEW PUPPETS COME FROM? DID YOU STEAL THEM? RESCUE THEM? OR WHAT?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

I DON'T KNOW, THAT'S WHY I'M ASKING YOU! IF YOU WANT ME TO BE USEFUL, IT'D BE NICE IF I KNEW WHAT I WAS UP AGAINST.



YOU'RE UP AGAINST HEAVEN AND HELL. OR HAVEN'T YOU BEEN PAYING ATTENTION?

THAT'S NOT AN ANSWER, THOSE ARE ENEMIES. IF I'M JOINING SOME KIND OF TEAM, I'D LIKE TO KNOW THAT I'M NOT GOING TO GET EATEN TOO.

FAIR ENOUGH.



EVERYONE ON THOSE TABLES, THEY WERE DEAD, OR AT LEAST DEAD TO SOME DEGREE. CAST AWAYS THAT HAD BEEN TOSSED TO THE SIDE BECAUSE OF THIS WAR I'VE BEEN FIGHTING.

BUT SINCE MY RETURN... I'VE NOTICED THINGS HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT. AND I'M TALKING SPECIFICALLY ABOUT MY POWERS. SOMEHOW, THEY'VE CHANGED AND I'M NOT THE SAME AS I USED TO BE.

IS THAT A GOOD THING?




* See issue 250 — Todd

SO FAR IT IS, AND SINCE MY COSTUME HAS COME BACK TO LIFE, IT'S ENABLED ME TO DO THINGS I HADN'T BEEN ABLE TO BEFORE.

AND ONE OF THOSE THINGS IS BEING ABLE TO RESURRECT THE DEAD. I'D DONE SOME VERSION OF IT BEFORE BUT NOT TO THE MAGNITUDE I CAN NOW. AND THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE IS THAT AFTER I RESURRECT THEM, THEY SOMEHOW TURN BLINDLY LOYAL TO ME. BECAUSE THERE WAS A TIME WHEN ALL OF THESE GUYS PERSONALLY TRIED TO KILL ME.







"IT SEEMS TO BE SOME
REMNANT POWER PASSED
DOWN THROUGH THE
CENTURIES, BUT I'M
THINKING IT WAS ALWAYS
THERE, LYING DORMANT
UNTIL MY WIFE'S DAUGHTER
JOLTED IT AWAKE."

"NOW MY COSTUME
SEEMS CAPABLE OF
CONTROLLING THE DEAD,
LIKE THAT ORIGINAL
SPAWN CONTROLLED
THE DAMNED."

"AND HE MUST HAVE BEEN
A RUTHLESS DICTATOR
OVER THOSE SOULS,
BECAUSE HELL TOOK
ENOUGH NOTICE THAT
THEY'VE BEEN KEEPING THE
POWER OF SPAWN ALIVE
EVER SINCE."

"I'M JUST THE LATEST
VERSION OF THEM
FUSING A DEAD MAN TO
THAT CREATURE."



IS THAT WHY YOU NEED TO SEE DOWNING?

YES.

BUT THERE'S A WAY I CAN BREAK THIS CURSE.



HE'S IN A COMA.



I KNOW. I'M THE ONE THAT PUT HIM THERE.

THEY WERE HOPING SHE'D BE A USEFUL DISTRACTION.

THAT'S WHY I NEED TO GET TO HIM FIRST. BECAUSE IF I DON'T, THEN THEY WILL. THEY KNOW HOW IMPORTANT HE IS TO ALL OF THIS AND WHY THEY KILLED MY WIFE. NOT BECAUSE SHE DID ANYTHING TO THEM. THEY MURDERED HER SIMPLY TO GET MY ATTENTION.



THEY KILLED YOUR WIFE, SO YOU WOULDN'T BE FOCUSED ON DOWNING?

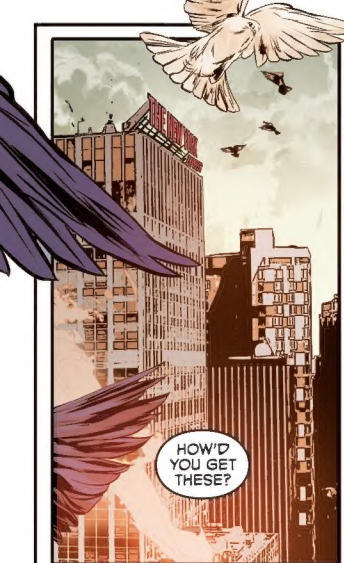


BUT JIM'S STILL AT THE HOSPITAL, WHY WOULDN'T THEY GO AFTER HIM INSTEAD OF YOU?

BECAUSE, THEY NEED US BOTH IN THE SAME ROOM. KILLING US SEPARATELY WON'T ALLOW MY SYMBIOTE COSTUME TO DISENGAGE. PLUS, TOO MANY GOVERNMENT SUITS ARE RUNNING SCARED, THEY WON'T STRIKE NOW.

BUT YOUR PLAN IS YOU WANT ME TO GET YOU IN THE SAME ROOM AS DOWNING? SO, THEY CAN KILL YOU?

THEY WON'T KILL ME, THEY WON'T EVEN TRY, BECAUSE I'M GOING TO KEEP THEM DISTRACTED TOO.



HOW'D YOU GET THESE?



I JUST DID, AND MY SOURCE IS SOLID.

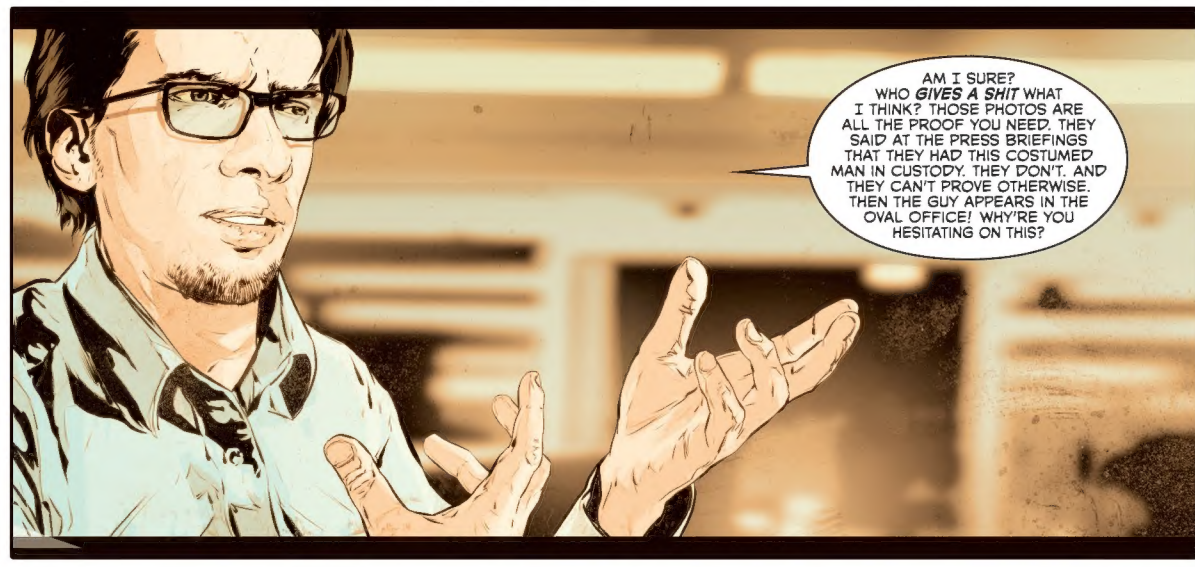


IF WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS TRUE, THIS COULD BLOW THE LID OFF AN ENTIRE GOVERNMENT COVER-UP. YOU WILLING TO PUT YOUR CAREER ON THE LINE FOR THIS?

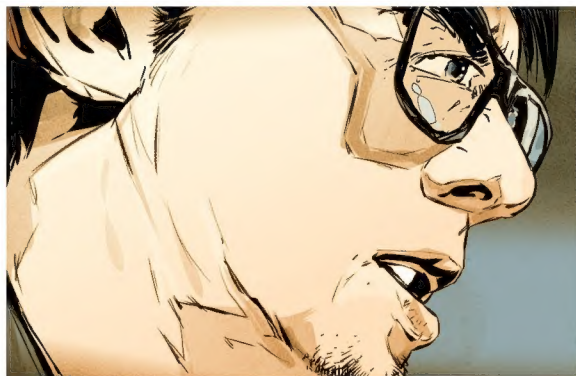
CHRIST.

THAT'S WHY I BROUGHT THEM TO YOU.

AND YOU'RE 100% SURE ABOUT THIS?



AM I SURE? WHO *GIVES A SHIT* WHAT I THINK? THOSE PHOTOS ARE ALL THE PROOF YOU NEED. THEY SAID AT THE PRESS BRIEFINGS THAT THEY HAD THIS COSTUMED MAN IN CUSTODY. THEY DON'T. AND THEY CAN'T PROVE OTHERWISE. THEN THE GUY APPEARS IN THE OVAL OFFICE! WHY'RE YOU HESITATING ON THIS?





THE FALLOUT CONTINUES, AS PRESSURE MOUNTS ON THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT TO MAKE GOOD ON THEIR CAMPAIGN PROMISE OF "DEALING IN THE OPEN WITH FULL TRANSPARENCY." QUESTIONS REMAIN REGARDING THE CURRENT LOCATION OF A COSTUMED MAN THE WHITE HOUSE CONTINUES TO INSIST IS IN CUSTODY. VIDEO OF THE PRISON RIOTS THAT TOOK PLACE A FEW DAYS AGO APPEAR TO HAVE CAUGHT THIS SAME MAN ON TAPE.

BUT, DISTURBINGLY, IMAGES HAVE CIRCULATED SHOWING THAT SAME COSTUMED MAN SOMEHOW APPEARING INSIDE THE WHITE HOUSE WHILE THE PRESIDENT WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF A TELEVISED INTERVIEW. THAT TAPE SEEMED TO SHOW OUR COSTUMED MAN, ALONG WITH ANOTHER INDIVIDUAL, INVADING THE OVAL OFFICE. THE TAPE OF THAT SEEMING ATTACK WAS CONFISCATED BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. THE TELEVISION NETWORK DOING THE INTERVIEW SAYS THAT NONE OF THE TAPE HAS BEEN ALTERED.

THIS FLIES IN THE FACE OF STATEMENTS GIVEN BY BOTH REPORTERS IN THE ROOM, WHO SAY THERE IS EVEN MORE FILM TO SHOW WHAT HAPPENED.



THOSE REPORTERS HAVE BOTH BEEN PLACED ON TEMPORARY LEAVE. BOTH HAVE RETAINED LEGAL COUNCIL TO HELP THEM FEND OFF WHAT THEY SAY ARE "UNFOUNDED ALLEGATIONS" INTO THEIR PERSONAL LIVES. THE QUESTIONS WE HERE IN GERMANY ARE ASKING OURSELVES ARE WHY, AFTER ALL THIS TIME, DO WE NOT KNOW THE IDENTITY OF THIS MASKED MAN? AND, WHY DOES THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, AND NOW APPARENTLY A NEWS NETWORK, SEEM BENT ON COVERING UP THE WHEREABOUT OF THE MYSTERIOUS MAN?... A MAN WHO WAS INITIALLY TAKEN INTO CUSTODY FOR KIDNAPPING A POPULAR MUSICIAN?

AND NOW, WE HAVE THE DEVASTATING PHOTOS FROM THE *NEW YORK EXPRESS* SHOWING THIS COSTUMED MAN IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESIDENT. THIS UNDERCUTS EVERY COMMENT THE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION HAS MADE THAT THE WHOLE STORY IS NOTHING BUT 'FAKE NEWS,' A TERM THEY TEND TO THROW ABOUT WHENEVER THE FACTS DO NOT SEEM TO FAVOR THEM.

THE BIG QUESTION IS, *WHY?*... WHY ARE SO MANY OFFICIALS FROM THE U.S. WILLING TO DEFEND OR SUPPORT THESE CLAIMS THAT ARE NOW SEEMING TO BE DUBIOUS AT BEST, AND BLATANT LIES AT WORST?




ALSO, EARLIER TODAY, THE LEADERS OF SEVERAL COUNTRIES CAME TO STAND WITH AMERICA AGAINST WHAT THEY SAY IS A 'HOAX.' RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN SAID THAT HE WILL "ASSIST IN ANY CAPACITY HE CAN" TO ASSURE "THE SAFETY OF ALL WORLD LEADERS AND THEIR GOVERNMENTS AGAINST ANY FURTHER TERRORIST ACTIVITIES." HE COULD PROVIDE NO PROOF THAT ANY OF THE RECENT EVENTS HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH ANY KNOWN TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS, HOWEVER.

ALL THIS COMES AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF THE WORLD'S STOCK MARKETS DROPPING TO LEVELS NOT SEEN IN MORE THAN 7 YEARS. C.E.O.'S OF AT LEAST A DOZEN GLOBAL COMPANIES HAVE ALSO BEGUN TO DISAPPEAR FROM VIEW, WITH RUMORS WIDELY CIRCULATING THAT THEIR LACK OF PUBLIC APPEARANCES MAY BE BECAUSE SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED TO THEM PERSONALLY.

THIS GLOBAL NIGHTMARE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN STARTED AT THE SAME TIME THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT BEGAN LYING PUBLICLY. THESE ARE ALL FAST-MOVING STORIES AND WE WILL BRING YOU ANY UPDATES AS SOON AS WE HAVE THEM. STAY TUNED.

STOCKS DOWN 2% ... US LEADERS UNDER PRESSURE

A dramatic comic book illustration showing the character Spawn, a red devil-like figure with horns and wings, flying over a city in flames. In the foreground, a statue of a man holding a cross is shown in profile, looking towards the burning city. The sky is filled with thick, dark smoke and fire.

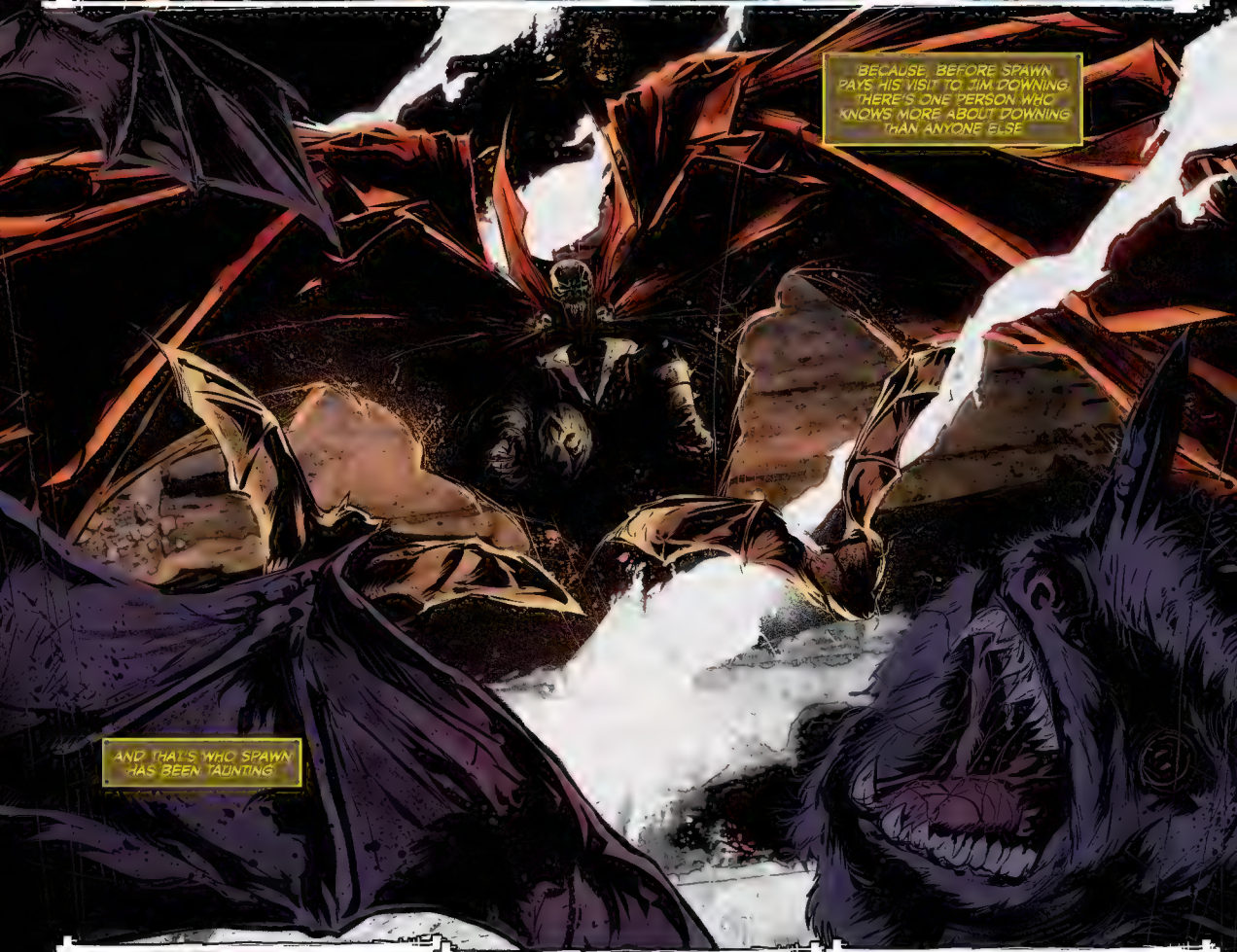
WHILE MARC CONTINUES HIS GOAL OF GETTING THE MEDIA TO KEEP UP THE PRESSURE ON THE WHITE HOUSE, SPAWN MADE HIS NEXT MOVE BY ATTACKING A SMALL GROUP OF LOW-LEVEL SOLDIERS WHO'VE BEEN WORKING ON HELL'S SIDE. THOUGH THEIR APPEARANCE LOOKED LIKE THEY WERE 'NORMAL' HUMAN BEINGS, SPAWN'S COSTUME TOLD HIM OTHERWISE.

WORD OF HIS ACTIONS QUICKLY SPREAD, AND THOSE WHO HAVE A VESTED INTEREST IN THE DEMISE OF THOSE HELLISH SOLDIERS, WILL HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO REACT TO HIS TAUNTING.

WHICH IS EXACTLY WHAT SPAWN WANTS.



BECAUSE, BEFORE SPAWN
PAYS HIS VISIT TO JIM DOWNING
THERE'S ONE PERSON WHO
KNOWS MORE ABOUT DOWNING
THAN ANYONE ELSE



AND THAT'S WHO SPAWN
HAS BEEN TAUNTING



SO, MR.
SIMMONS...



...WE
FINALLY GET
TO MEET.



THOUGH I MUST SAY, I'M DISAPPOINTED YOU FELT THE NEED TO KILL SOME OF MY SOLDIERS TO GET MY ATTENTION, BUT I'VE HEARD HOW RECKLESS YOU CAN BE, SO I SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISED, SHOULD I?



DOWNING?
TELL ME ABOUT HIM.

THAT'S IT?
WE'RE JUST GOING TO JUMP STRAIGHT INTO THIS THEN?

SPAWN STANDS SILENT, UNMOVING. HIS ENEMY CAN SEE THIS. SPAWN WON'T BE BAILED INTO SOME MEANINGLESS SMALL TALK.



YOU'VE CHANGED, I CAN TELL.

THAT'S WHY YOU'VE BEEN ACTING LIKE YOU HAVE--YOU WANT US TO BELIEVE YOU'RE STILL DRIVEN BY YOUR EMOTIONS? BUT IT'S CALCULATED. YOU'RE NOT DOING ANYTHING BY ACCIDENT ARE YOU?

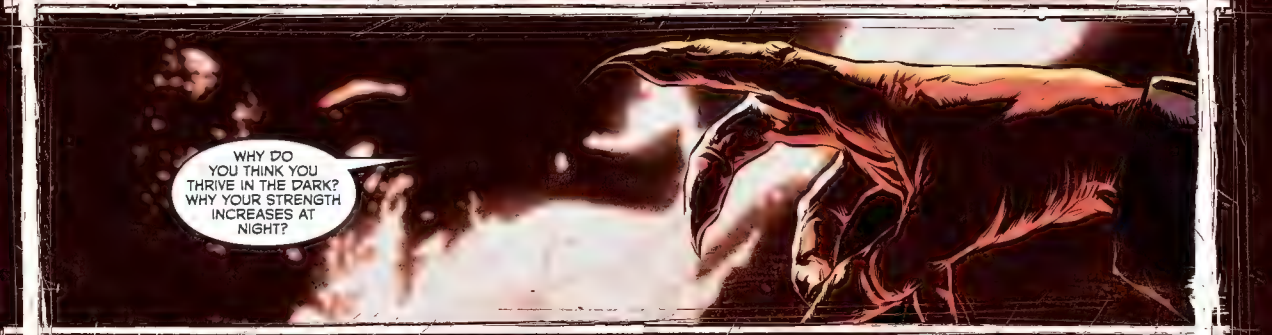
HELL'S NOT GOING TO LIKE THAT.



BUT I'M SURE, YOU'VE PLANNED FOR THAT REACTION TOO, HAVEN'T YOU? AND I'VE UNWITTINGLY FELL INTO YOUR TRAP TOO. WELL DONE, BROTHER.

I'M NOT YOUR BROTHER.

OF COURSE, YOU ARE, BUT KEEP DELUDING YOURSELF. BUT YOU KNOW WE'RE CUT FROM THE SAME CLOTH. YOU'VE JUST NEVER ACCEPTED THAT. IT'S WHY YOU FAILED SO MISERABLY YOUR FIRST FEW YEARS. BUT NOW... LOOK AT YOU. SO, DENY ALL YOU WANT. YOU'RE STILL AS MUCH A VAMPIRE AS I AM.



WHY DO YOU THINK YOU THRIVE IN THE DARK? WHY YOUR STRENGTH INCREASES AT NIGHT?



BECAUSE
YOU'RE ONE
OF US!

SO, EMBRACE IT!
BECAUSE WHEN THEY
COME FOR YOU--AND
I PROMISE THEY'LL COME--
BEING A VAMPIRE MIGHT BE
THE ONLY THING THAT'LL
KEEP YOU ALIVE.

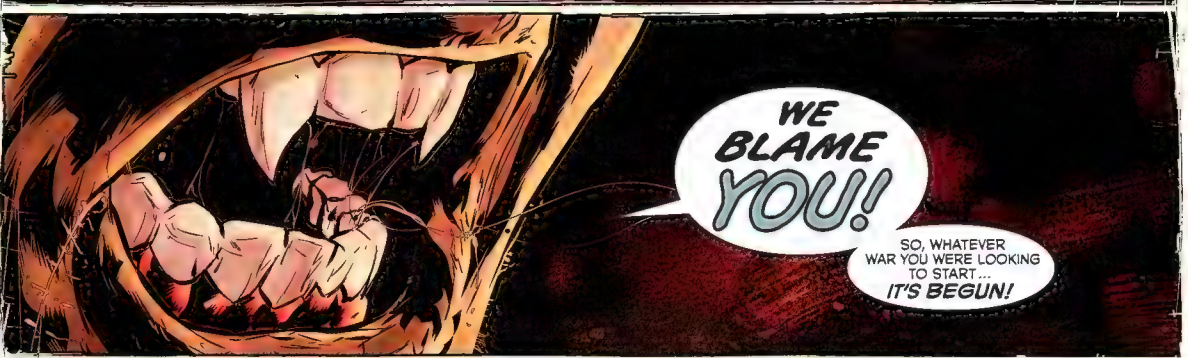


YOU'RE
RIGHT,
I HAVE BEEN
PLANNING.



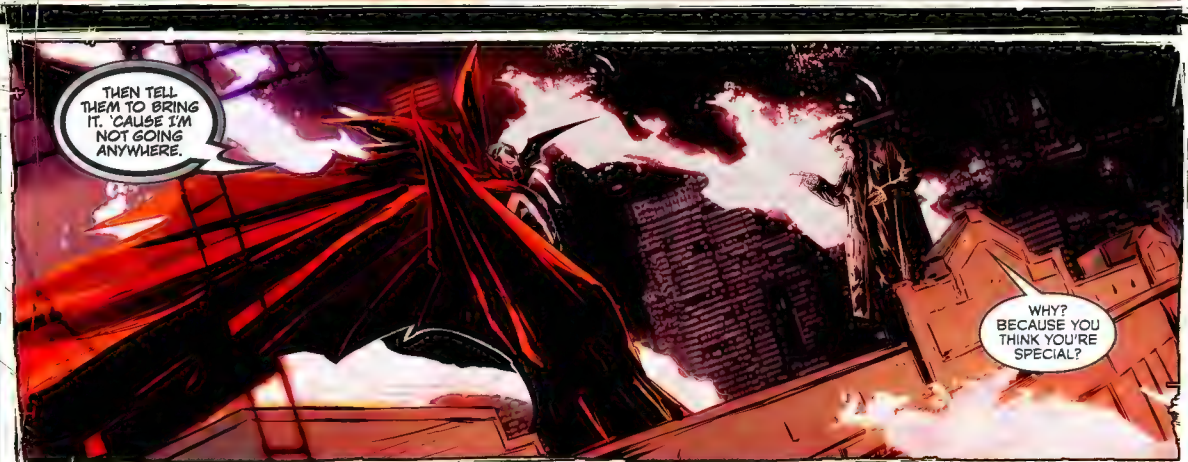
AND I
HOPE THEY
DO COME.

THEN YOU'RE A FOOL!
WHAT DID YOU THINK WAS GOING
TO HAPPEN WHEN YOU SEALED THE
'DEAD ZONES'? EVERYTHING AND EVERY-
ONE YOU LOCKED ON THIS PLANET CAN'T
RETURN HOME. YOU LOCKED US ALL OUT
AND NOW EVERY ONE OF THEM FROM
HEAVEN OR HELL OR THOSE OF US
THAT ARE INDEPENDENT...



WE
BLAME
YOU!

SO, WHATEVER
WAR YOU WERE LOOKING
TO START...
IT'S BEGUN!



THEN TELL
THEM TO BRING
IT. 'CAUSE I'M
NOT GOING
ANYWHERE.

WHY?
BECAUSE YOU
THINK YOU'RE
SPECIAL?

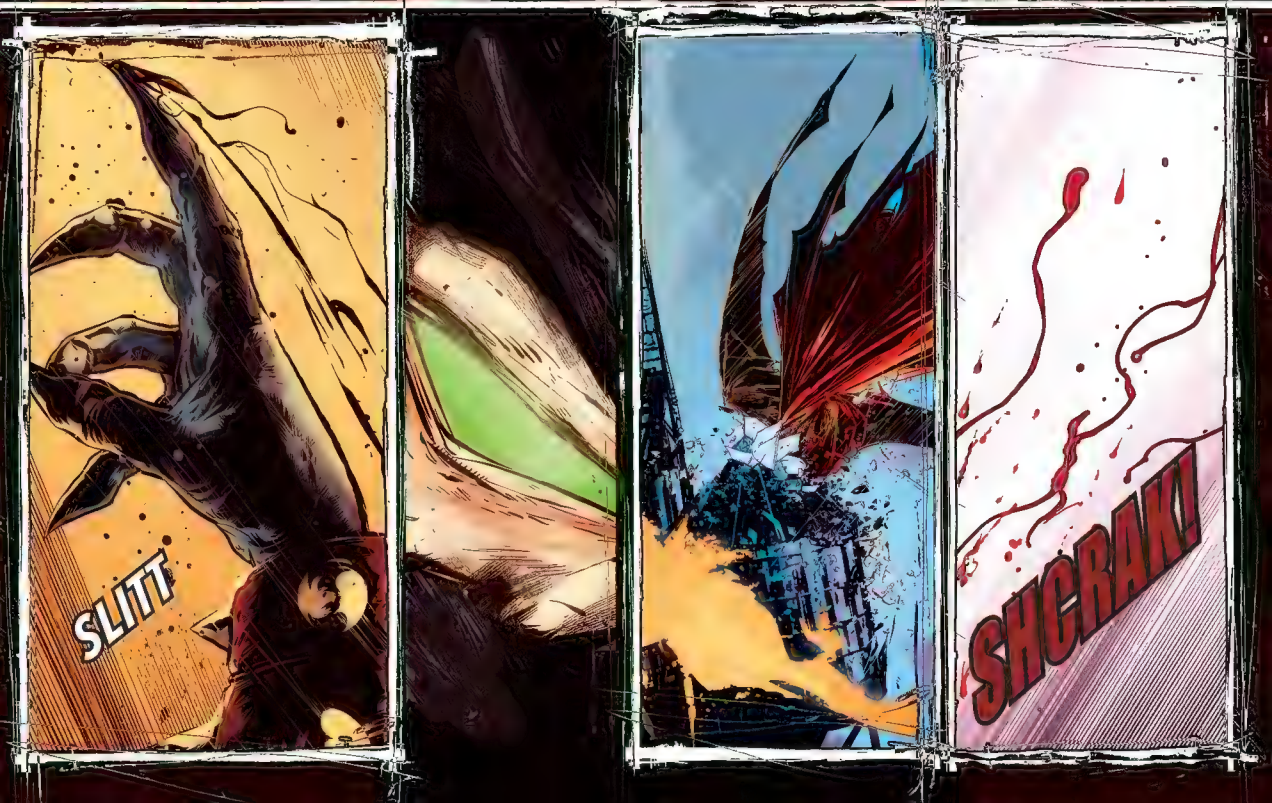
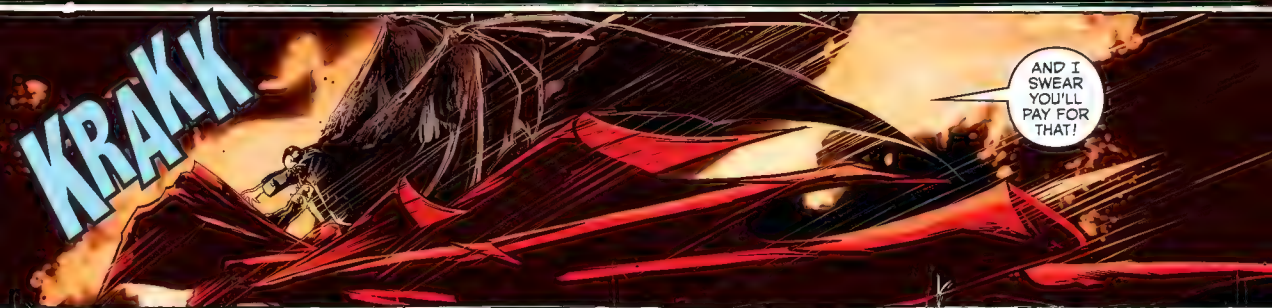


"DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY SPAWNS HAVE TRIED TO DO WHAT YOU'RE DOING? ALL OF THEM! THEY ALL LET THEIR ARROGANCE MAKE THEM THINK THEY WERE BETTER AND SMARTER THAN EVERYONE ELSE THEY ALL THOUGHT THAT IF THEY COULD JUST SET THEIR TRAP JUST PERFECT... THEN THEY'D BE ABLE TO ESCAPE THEIR FATE."

"BUT LOOK AROUND! HOW MANY OTHER SPAWNS DO YOU SEE? NONE! BECAUSE THEY ALL FAILED!"

"BUT NOT YOU, YOU'RE GOING TO BE THE EXCEPTION. SOMEHOW YOU'RE GOING TO BE THE ONE TO CONTROL THIS WHOLE UNIVERSE. NOT GOD, NOT SATAN, BECAUSE THEY WEREN'T GOOD ENOUGH, WERE THEY? NO! IT'S GOING TO BE YOU!"

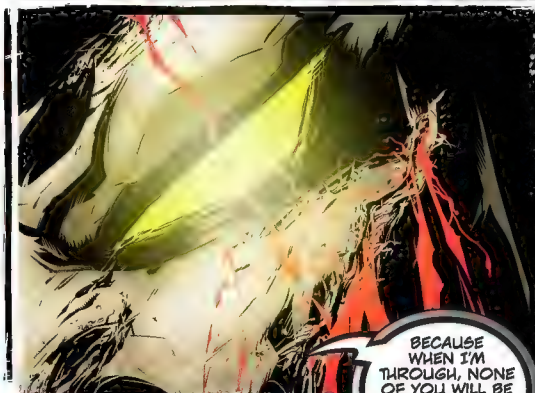
"AND WHO CARES WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH HAS NEVER HAPPENED IN THE ENTIRE HISTORY OF EXISTENCE!"





DOWNING!

YOU'RE GOING
TO TELL ME EVERY
FUCKING THING YOU
KNOW! AND WHEN
YOU'RE DONE
YOU'RE GOING TO
TELL ME ABOUT
MY WIFE!



BECAUSE
WHEN I'M
THROUGH, NONE
OF YOU WILL BE
STANDING! YOU
TELL THEM TO
COME.


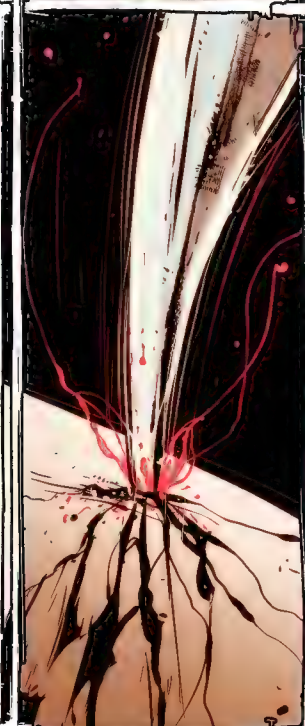

YOU
TELL
THEM!



KRAKK!



TELL
THEM!



THIS VAMPIRE CALLED
BLUDD SAID SPAWN
WASN'T DRIVEN BY
EMOTIONS ANYMORE.
HE'S WRONG.



OH MY GOD!
WHY THE DRAMATIC
ENTRANCE ALL THE
TIME? THE FRONT
DOOR'S UNLOCKED
YOU KNOW.

I ASKED
IF YOU'RE
READY?

I'VE BEEN
WAITING. HOW'D
YOUR NIGHT GO?
YOU GET WHAT YOU
NEEDED?

NOT
AT FIRST.
BUT I CAN
BE PRETTY
PERSUASIVE
WHEN I
WANT.

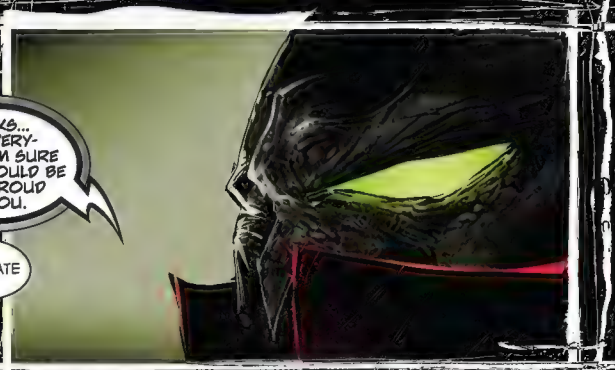
TELL ME
ABOUT IT. I'M
SURE YOU DIDN'T SEE
BUT I GOT MY FORMER
BOSS TO RUN THAT STORY.
IT'S ALREADY HITTING THE
INTERNET HARD AND I
CAN'T WAIT TO SEE HOW
ALL THESE POLITICIANS
AND C.E.O.'S HANDLE
THIS PRESSURE.

WILL THE
MEDIA KEEP
IT UP?

THERE'S
BLOOD IN THE
WATER NOW.
EVERY OUTLET'S
GOING TO WANT
A PIECE OF
THIS.



MARC?
THANKS...
FOR EVERY-
THING. I'M SURE
SUSAN WOULD BE
VERY PROUD
OF YOU.
YEAH?
I
APPRECIATE
THAT.

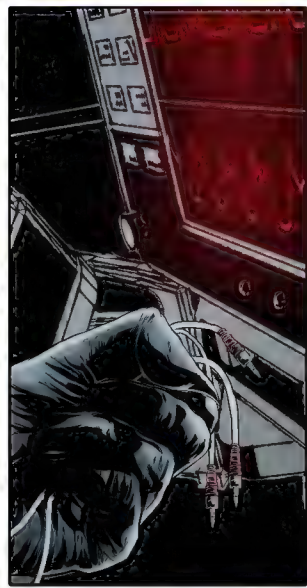


MINUTES LATER SPAWN
WITH MARC IN TOW,
STEPS INTO A SHADOW
TELEPORTING TO THEIR
DESTINATION. MARC STANDS
OUTSIDE MAKING SURE
THE HALLS ARE QUIET

IT'S A SHAME
YOU'LL NEVER KNOW
HOW IMPORTANT
YOU'LL BE TO MY
CAUSE.



SPAWN HESITATES FOR A MOMENT NOT
FROM FEAR, BECAUSE WHAT HE NEEDS
TO DO NEXT IS FOR THE GREATER
GOOD. BUT BECAUSE HE KNEW
THAT JIM DOWNING'S LIFE ULTIMATELY
WOULD FALL INTO HIS HANDS



To Be Continued

SPAWNING GROUND

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MONTHLY CONTEST

WIN a 10 minute Skype call with Todd McFarlane and some COOL McFarlane toys and comics!

Each month readers will be giving a secret code word available ONLY in Spawning Ground.

Enter that code word HERE:

mcfarlane.com/spawningground for your chance to win awesome prizes!

Spawn issue #292 Code Word: **TINKLE**

Winners will be notified by email two weeks after the release of the comic.

Good Luck!

Thank you, as always, for being loyal fans of Spawn!

Shannon Bailey
Publishing Coordinator



NEXT ISSUE

Spawn acquires a new power and goes toe-to-toe with his most HATED enemies.

HOLLYWOOD NEWS:

Soon to be a major motion picture from Blumhouse Productions, directed by Todd McFarlane, and starring Jamie Foxx as Spawn and Jeremy Renner as Twitch.

"One of the best debuts of the year. Sebela and Hixson create the book you didn't realize you needed."

—Ed Brubaker

"Sebela, Hixson, and Otsmane-Elhaou are making art that should be recognized by all for its undisputed greatness. If you're not buying it you're a jerk and you can go to hell."

—Robert Kirkman

"Combines two of my favorites: blood-soaked history and grim revenge."

—Kelly Sue DeConnick

"At turns fun, unsettling, and deeply satisfying, the book's sliding scale of morality makes its extraordinary antihero not only easy to cheer for but even unnervingly charming."

—Grace Ellis

"Intense, beautiful, heartfelt, tragic, and leaves you shaken."

—Matthew Rosenberg

SHANGHAI RED

CHRISTOPHER
SEBELA

JOSHUA
HIXSON

HASSAN
OTSMANE
ELHAOU

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FROM THE
CO-CREATOR OF
THE WICKED +
THE DIVINE

D

GILLEN
HANS
COWLES

I

E™

WHEN
FANTASY
GETS REAL

DECEMBER
2018

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MOVE OVER, DICKENS. YOUR BOY'S A POST-APOCALYPTIC SUPERHERO NOW.

"...a terrific story and career-best art from Darick Robertson."

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OLIVER™

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SELF MADE™

Discover epic adventure
and dive into masterful
storytelling from debut
creators MAT GROOM
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DECEMBER 2018



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DEMON'S DAYS ARE NUMBERED.

Killed by his own men, Government Agent Al Simmons struck a deal with the devil, resurrecting him from the depths of hell. Returning to Earth he guards the forgotten alleys of New York City as the warrior Spawn, a hero unlike any other. Seeking answers about his past, Spawn grapples with the dark forces that returned him to earth, battling enemies and discovering unlikely allies.

Even though the doors of Heaven and Hell are now locked, there's enough evil on Earth to keep Spawn busy. But without his full powers, Spawn will have to find a way to fight his enemies without getting himself killed again in *Spawn: Hell on Earth*. Featuring the kinetic art and imaginative story-telling of Image Comics founders Todd McFarlane (*Spawn*, *Spider-Man*, *The Incredible Hulk*) and Erik Larsen (*Savage Dragon*, *Spider-Man*), as well as veteran *Spawn* artist Szymon Kudranski, this is one collection you don't want to miss!

The *Spawn: Hell on Earth* trade paperback collects 12 issues — a whole year's worth — of this fan-favorite story into one thick volume. All at a hard to beat price.



SPAWN: HELL ON EARTH
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